

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, February 14, 2003

MPDC URGES CRISIS PLANNING BY BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

With the National Threat Condition level still on “High” (Orange) and the MPDC’s emergency response level at Level II, the Department is reaching out to business and community leaders and encouraging them to review and update their crisis plans. Chief Ramsey, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI’s Washington Field Office Van Harp, and other law enforcement officials briefed approximately 300 business and civic leaders during a meeting organized by the Greater Washington Board of Trade. In a detailed presentation on crisis planning for private facilities, the MPDC provided various protocols that should be considered by businesses, institutions and building managers in the case of a terrorist attack.

Among the topics covered were evacuation and security plans, plans for “sheltering in place,” package and mail delivery, surveillance techniques (including monitoring of garages, containers and other outside structures), employee identification and contact lists, and emergency use of buildings’ air handling and HVAC systems. Officials said that while the MPDC and other DC government entities are well prepared to handle a terrorist attack, individual companies, organizations and civic institutions must be ready, willing and able to provide a certain level of security at their facilities and for their employees and constituents. To view a PDF file of the MPDC’s Crisis Planning presentation, click on mpdc.dc.gov/news/pubs/pdf/crisisplanning.pdf.

① The District Department of Transportation this week reminded residents about contingency plans for getting out of DC using designated event/evacuation routes. For more details, please see: http://ddot.dc.gov/information/event_route.shtml

① The MPDC continues to encourage DC residents to take common-sense preparations in the case of any emergency. For information and ideas, view DC’s Family Emergency Preparedness Guide, please see: <http://dcema.dc.gov/info/guide.shtml>

MPDC ISSUES STATEMENT ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO FATAL JANUARY 15 FIRE

In response to allegations of serious problems with both 9-1-1 service and police actions during a fatal fire last month, the MPDC this week released a statement and a videotape updating its investigation into the matter. The fire occurred on the morning of January 15, 2003, at a house at 1617 21st Street, NW, where, tragically, one person died. To date, the investigation has revealed that one resident who has repeatedly alleged that he tried to call 9-1-1 at approximately 5:20 am—almost 40 minutes before the first 9-1-1 call was received—and was then placed on hold, was mistaken. Verizon telephone and MPDC data systems verify that the citizen actually called 9-1-1 at approximately 6:03 am, or 43 minutes later than he believed—a fact that the resident now acknowledges. The MPDC has also reviewed allegations that an MPDC officer failed to render assistance at the event, but rather drove off in his police cruiser. A security tape of the scene shows the officer in question actually rushing to move another police car that had been parked in the street, so that approaching fire apparatus could access the burning house. Another MPDC officer had left the first cruiser in the middle of the street so that he could sprint toward the burning building to render assistance. These and other heroic actions of the responding police officers are depicted in the security tape, and Chief Ramsey has recommended Departmental recognition for all three police officers who rendered assistance that morning.

① Read the complete statement at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=1927>

SLIGHT MODIFICATION MADE TO “FLASHING LIGHTS” ON MPDC MARKED CRUISERS

As was announced last month, Chief Ramsey has directed that all MPDC marked police cruisers be operated with two alternating flashing lights on their overhead light bars activated at all times. This policy is designed to alert citizens of police presence in their communities and to make police units more readily recognizable to citizens should they need immediate assistance. The Department recognized that this new procedure was causing some confusion among motorists who thought officers may have been responding to an emergency or attempting to stop the motorist. To help minimize any confusion caused by this new procedure, the MPDC is removing the red and blue reflective shields from the light bars of its marked cruisers, so that the flashing lights activated during normal, non-emergency patrols will be white. The white alternating lights are designed to be more easily distinguishable from the full emergency lights. If a police unit is on an emergency assignment or attempting to stop a motorist, the operator must have all of his or her emergency lights activated and, in many cases, the siren. Motorists are reminded to pull to the right and stop should they observe an emergency vehicle, such as a police car, fire engine or ambulance, with full activation of its emergency equipment.

① Read the updated news release at:
<http://www.mpdc.org/blue/news.asp?sid=1909>

REMINDER: MPDC DISCONTINUING 727-1010; ALL NON-EMERGENCY CALLS TO BE DIRECTED TO 3-1-1

DC residents are reminded that, effective February 24, 2003, the MPDC will phase out its seven-digit non-emergency telephone number—727-1010—and will instead direct all non-emergency calls to the toll-free 3-1-1 number. More than a decade ago, the MPDC launched 727-1010 as an alternative to 9-1-1 for residents who needed to contact the police in non-emergency situations. In January 2000, the MPDC implemented 3-1-1 as an easy-to-remember, toll-free non-emergency number for callers inside the District. Even with 3-1-1, the Department continued to maintain the 727-1010 number as a convenience to residents who were accustomed to using the seven-digit number and for use by callers from outside the District. Beginning February 24, however, callers to 727-1010 will be directed to hang up and call 3-1-1 for police non-emergencies or the Citywide Call Center, 727-1000, for other city services. Non-emergency callers from outside DC will be directed to call the MPDC on (202) 737-4404. As always, emergency calls should be made to 9-1-1.

① Read the news release at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=1927>

① For more information about 9-1-1, 3-1-1, and other MPDC hotlines, log on to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/phone/phone.shtm>

NEWS & NOTES

Presidents' Day Schedules. Most of the MPDC administrative offices will be closed on Monday, February 17, in observance of the Presidents' Day holiday. Neighborhood police patrols, the Public Safety Communications Center and other essential police services will be fully staffed.

“Chatting with the Chief.” Chief Ramsey takes your phone calls during his monthly radio program on WHUR-96.3 FM, Tuesday, February 18, from 6:40–7:00 pm.

Washington Boat Show. The MPDC Harbor Patrol will continue passing out safety information at this year's Washington Boat Show, through February 17, at the Washington Convention Center.

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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